



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Mary's CE (Aided) Primary School

Laureston Place  
Dover  
CT16 1QX

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 8 June 2015

Date of last inspection: 8 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 118748

Headteacher: Helen D'Cruz

Inspector's name and number: Susan Thompson (714)

#### School context

St Mary's is an average-sized primary school in an urban setting in an identified area of deprivation. Pupil mobility is high and the proportion of pupils for whom English is a second language is above average; twenty-two different languages are spoken by the pupils in the school. The school has recently achieved the Arts Mark, the school's focus on music played a significant part in achieving this award. The church is located near the school; the yearlong interregnum has now ended with the appointment of a new vicar.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are good.

- There is a strong ethos of care and pastoral support linked to the school values in the school community; some identify this as being because St Mary's is a Church School.
- The head teacher and chair of governors are clear on the next steps to develop St Mary's.
- Pupils value the opportunities for prayer that exist during the school day either individually or corporately.
- The whole school emphasis on creativity through music is used to enhance collective worship.

#### Areas to improve

- Complete the areas of development from the last inspection, particularly identifying biblical teachings that support the six values and communicate these in a memorable way to all members of the school community.
- To provide appropriately challenging learning activities, especially in year 5 and 6, to ensure higher levels outcomes which are comparable with attainment in literacy.
- Involve a greater range of stakeholders in the regular and systematic evaluation and improvement planning of the aspects of Church School distinctiveness including collective worship.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the outside quiet area and make appropriate changes to

enable this area to better serve its purpose.

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners.**

The school's Christian values are at the core of school life. The pupils and parents are very aware of the values. The pupils in particular, can identify how the values have an impact on the life of the school. One child told me "we love each other because God loves everyone." Other Christian teachings relating to the values were not articulated by the school community. RE in year 1 and 5 this term is focusing on Christian values in the bible, however, at present this understanding is not embedded. The children's attainment and progress are broadly in line with national averages for English and Maths and those pupils from vulnerable groups are well supported to aid progress. The school community actively promotes personal development and well-being. Pupils are actively encouraged to work together collaboratively and learn from each other, for instance the use of talk partners was seen in many lessons and in collective worship. Children's moral and social development are areas of strength, they are aware of the need to care for each other and help others around the world that are in need. For instance, a year 4 child spoke of fund-raising for shelters to help the homeless in Nepal. Other pupils told me "it was important to give to others to help to remember how lucky we are." The school has an internationally diverse population. Pupils integrate well with pupils of other nationalities; this is one area of priority for the school. Some work has been undertaken to promote understanding of others through visiting speakers and through using some international music and songs. Pupils are aware of other world faiths and can talk about the different faiths they have learnt about. They also identify that we should be friends with everyone.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Collective Worship is distinctively Christian in content and major Christian festivals are celebrated, both in school and in church. The Diocesan planning document is used by the Headteacher as a basis for the school to develop its own plans. Hence the schedule reflects the Church of England calendar and includes a focus on the Trinity annually. The plan revisits Christian values every couple of years. The inspection took place just after Trinity Sunday and the collective worship observed had the theme of Trinity. Objects, such as a tricycle were used to engage the children's interest and aide their peer talk during collective worship about the Trinity. Consequently their understanding of The Holy Trinity is developing. Pupils can name the three persons of the Trinity and name some objects that link to the idea of one thing with three parts. Pupils enjoy the opportunity learn, pray, celebrate and sing together. They value the opportunity to celebrate their achievements together and feel able to speak to staff about any questions that arise from participating in a collective worship. Currently pupils support or lead aspects of collective worship such as leading the welcoming liturgical sentences and demonstrating the actions of songs. A group of pupils are part of 'Sing Up'. This group encourages participation by leading at the front and giving stickers for those joining in well on a Wednesday singing collective worship. The Headteacher identified the next phase of development is to involve pupils in planning collective worship. The Headteacher and RE subject lead have evaluated a small number of collective worship times this year. Evaluations by the wider school community are not undertaken regularly. Classroom reflection areas are valued by the children. They enjoy responding to these opportunities in a variety of ways, such as tying a bead on the fishing net to represent a prayer. The importance of these areas is shown through pupil voice, "this is where you can go if your pet dies or your mum is ill to make your wishes to God." Another child said, "it is where you can show your friendliness to God." Pupils value opportunities to be quiet; they do not find the quiet area on the playground often gives this opportunity.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Both learning about and learning from RE are evident in each lesson, for instance year two

pupils demonstrated a knowledge of justice and how they show justice in their own lives. Teachers in most year groups place a high priority on the teaching of RE as evidenced through the quantity and variety of learning activities seen in the books. Whilst attainment in key stage 1 is broadly in line with expectations for literacy, attainment at the end of key stage 2 is less secure at level 5. Marking is undertaken in accordance with the marking policy, although few formative comments were evident in the books seen. The subject leader collects data twice a year demonstrating the attainment of each child. She is starting to use this data to inform feedback to teachers. Analysis of this data shows a broad pattern across the school that pupils attain less well in the areas of meaning, purpose and truth, and forms of expression. During the year the school has implemented the new Diocesan scheme of work. This has resulted in increasingly challenging learning objectives for key stage two that move from retelling to higher order skills. It is a little soon for the impact of this change to be seen in the results. The pupils cover the six main world religions during their time at St Mary's, they value this opportunity. A minority of classes are overly dependent on completing published sheets. This limits the variety of learning opportunities. The subject leader has been in post for two years and is committed to driving forward improvements. She is developing her skills at making assessments of learning and identifying progress. The RE leader reports to governors annually. Enrichment activities such as the Pentecost Experience provide opportunities for spiritual development as well as engaging the pupils in active learning strategies. Some pupils are ambivalent to their views of RE. Others reported enjoying the learning about Moses parting the Red Sea because they made the big display and watched a film clip.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good.**

The parents are generally positive about the school and are pleased with the well-rounded pupils they see leaving the school. One parent said "I feel very fortunate that my son is able to go to a school that has such as strong Christian core." When difficulties between members of the school community arise pupils are encouraged to apologise and forgive one another. The physical environment reflects Christian signs and symbols which can be explained by the children. For example, the pupils could speak of the creation story illustrated in the paintings in the hall. The school documentation, such as the prospectus and behaviour policies reflect the school values. Areas of development from the last inspection have begun to be addressed. Pupils can identify how the six values make a difference to their lives, although cannot say which specific biblical teachings these values are rooted in. Developments in the assessment and monitoring of RE have taken place, these need embedding further in light of the new Diocesan curriculum. The teaching of RE is prioritised by the place it has within the curriculum, it is taught by the class teacher and links are made to Christian teaching. The RE subject leader is well supported by the Headteacher in taking forward developments in the subject. The school meets its legal requirements regarding RE. Some evaluation has taken place with a range of stakeholders, however the regularity of this needs to be increased to inform developments. The school community gathers each day as a whole for collective worship, in addition to praying together as a class twice a day. The school meets the legal requirements for a wholly Christian, daily act of Collective Worship. Governors and the school community have been affected by the interregnum; this has recently come to an end with the appointment of a new incumbent. The Chair of Governors is committed to developing the school as a church school and is learning what this means for the governors. He is working closely with the Headteacher in school improvement planning.

SIAMS report June 2015 St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary, CT16 IQX